Migraine and associated comorbidities are three times more frequent in children with ADHD and their mothers


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Abstract

OBJECTIVE:
Attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a neuro-developmental disorder related to internalizing and externalizing disorders as well as somatic complaints and disorders. This study was conducted to evaluate the prevalence of headache subtypes, epilepsy, atopic disorders, motion sickness and recurrent abdominal pain among children and adolescents with ADHD and their parents.

METHODS:
In a multi-center, cross-sectional, familial association study using case-control design, treatment naïve children and adolescents between 6 and 18 years of age diagnosed with ADHD according to the DSM-5 criteria as well as age- and gender-matched healthy controls and their parents were evaluated by a neurologist and analyzed accordingly.

RESULTS:
117 children and adolescents with ADHD and 111 controls were included. Headache disorder diagnosis was common for both patients and healthy controls (59.0% vs. 37.8%), with a significantly elevated rate in the ADHD group (p = 0.002). Migraine was found in 26.0% of ADHD patients and 9.9% of healthy controls. Tension headache was found in 32.4% of ADHD patients and 27.9% of healthy controls. Headache diagnosis was also found to be significantly more common in mothers of children with ADHD than control group mothers (90.5% vs. 36.6%, p < 0.001).

CONCLUSION:
Headache diagnoses and specifically migraines were significantly more common among children with ADHD and their mothers, while recurrent abdominal pain was elevated in both parents and ADHD patients. Migraine is an important part of ADHD comorbidity, not only for children but also for mothers. Motion sickness may be reduced among families of ADHD probands.